WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1188 — December 2025

U.S. Workers: Stand with Venezuela!

Mattey/Anadolu

Caracas, December 13: Venezuelans protest U.S. provocations. Sign reads, "Take your blood-stained hands off of the Caribbean! Gringo go home!"

The article below was written by Maria Palacio, a union member in New York City.

U.S. imperialism is on the warpath, looking to squeeze the Global South and force its leaders to bend the knee. After decades of withstanding the weight of U.S. economic strangulation, Venezuela remains a thorn in the ass of the American ruling class. Ever since Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution took control of key industries, the imperialists have wanted to bring Venezuela down, and their inability to do that has only embarrassed Washington. So, it is looking to create hysteria in order to build support for military intervention. Trump has ordered the bombing of fishing boats, sent covert agents into the country, taken over two oil tankers and announced a blockade of all sanctioned oil.

No matter what is said about narco-traffickers and Venezuelan government repression, the real reason the U.S. is pushing to take down Maduro is to open Venezuela up to imperialist ravaging. The situation has only become more acute as different Latin American countries continue to make deals with China, which is now the region's second largest trading partner. These deals are infringing on the interests of the imperialists, and they cannot risk this getting out of hand, as they are politically bruised from the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians and the Ukraine-Russia war. U.S. imperialism has other targets too. Their attacks on Venezuela are also a means to choke Cuba, which is heavily dependent on Venezuelan oil and aid. It's a "two birds, one stone" effect, with the goal being to reverse the gains of the Cuban Revolution that led to the expropriation of imperialist property on the island.

Let's be clear: the U.S. toppling the Maduro regime would give the imperialists the upper hand they desperately need to strengthen their hegemony and crush Latin America. It would also give them the upper hand to crush workers in this country. Defense of Venezuela against all forms of U.S. intervention is vital to defense of workers here. The world, including the international working class, is anxiously watching the situation unfold and wondering what's going to happen next. In the U.S., the general mood of the working class is one of despair, as our bodies have been put to the grind.

Under Trump, we have seen a constant wave of attacks on our living and working conditions. Some union leaders are trying to pass themselves off as militants, claiming to fight Trump but doing so in partnership with the Democratic Party. This is the same party that created the grueling economic and social crisis in the first place, paving the way for Trump to come back into the White House. All of this mixed

continued on page 4

Jail the Killer Cop!

NYC: All Out for Eric Duprey!

WV Photo; Family photo (inset)

Bronx, February 2025: OPA and BLM Greater NY members at protest outside courthouse to demand justice for Eric Duprey.

For the first time in nearly a decade, an NYC cop will stand trial for killing yet another person from the Bronx, where the cops relentlessly hunt down and terrorize black people and Latinos. This time, the target was Eric Duprey, who came to the U.S. to search for work and escape the U.S. colonial subjugation and rape of Puerto Rico. The 30-year-old worker and father of two young children was viciously killed in cold blood. On 23 August 2023, he was riding his scooter when NYPD narc Erik Duran threw a 40-pound ice cooler at him, causing Eric to sideswipe a tree before falling and hitting his head on the curb. He died instantly from brain trauma.

Enough! The cops cannot keep getting away with this! We need to mobilize everyone possible from community groups, the unions and left organizations to show the cops that we've had it. They can't keep rolling through our neighborhoods like it's GTA and murdering our loved ones. There must not be any more blood spilled by these thugs. Let's turn out to the courthouse to say in one loud voice: ***Throw Erik Duran's ass in jail!***

For more than two years, the Duprey family has waited for justice, as the so-called "justice system" puts them through a painful rigmarole. At each pre-trial hearing, the family has had to endure an army of cops, who mobilize to support their brother-in-arms and intimidate those fighting for justice for Duprey. The prosecuting D.A.'s office has continually delayed the proceedings and botched the disclosure of evidence, showing no interest in putting the killer cop behind bars.

In every way, the system looks out for the killer cops. They are even given the option of a bench trial, in which the judge alone decides guilt or innocence. Duran, of course, opted for this, fully aware of

continued on page 5

Working Men: Keep Our Sisters Safe!

A skilled union woman worker submitted this letter on December 17.

Amber Czech, a 20-year-old welder, was murdered with a sledgehammer while working at a Minnesota factory on November 11. Her killer, a 40-year-old coworker, told police that he "didn't like her" and had been planning to murder her for some time. As far as I know, Amber was not a union member and didn't have the minimum safety protections of a union. This atrocity sparked discussions among union sisters about how under attack they feel at overwhelmingly male worksites. Amber's murder recalls the 2017 murder of Outi Hicks, a black woman union carpenter apprentice who was bludgeoned to death by a male coworker on the job.

Working men: We are counting on you to keep us safe. Women workers: The bosses are to blame for your unsafe conditions, and the government always protects the bosses. You must look to trustworthy class brothers and sisters for your protection. Let's organize to stand up for women! The most important thing is to organize all non-union workplaces and apprentices into fighting unions that defend all their members, including women, black people and other oppressed minorities.

Building trades union leaders have issued statements decrying Amber's murder and all attacks against women. But what solutions do they offer? NABTU promotes its "RESPECT program" for "labor-management cooperation" to "address head-on toxic cultures." The SMART union's Women's Committee says, "We call on employers, contractors, supervisors and every person on a job site to confront the culture that allowed this to happen." Instead of unionization drives and a union-centered fight for women, they offer man-shaming feminist schemes for women to seek protection by talking to the bosses.

These responses are typical of union bureaucrats who tell women workers to go to Human Resources (i.e., management) or joint management-union offices to report harassment. If women refuse to rat out a coworker, they are usually expected to just suffer in silence. Consistent with their pro-capitalist strategy, the bureaucrats look to the bosses, government and cops to protect women and, at the same time, claim it's divisive to talk about women's oppression. Both are wrong.

Fighting for women according to the bosses' rules is a losing game for all workers. We need to organize to protect women on the job from dangerous lunatics, stalkers and anti-woman bigots. If more women workers experienced men uniting to say, "Leave her alone" or "She's not into you, brother" or "If you have a problem with her, you will have a problem with us," women would stop believing that their only option is to report abusive workers to the abusive bosses or a government agency. At the same time, this would protect innocent men from employer provocations and false accusations.

Paradoxically, "Zero Tolerance" rules against workplace violence keep women less safe. They discourage good men from stepping up against abusive men and putting the fear of god in them to leave a woman alone. The "Zero Tolerance" company policies target pro-union militants and are racist against black men, who can be punished for merely displaying anger, let alone intimidating an anti-woman coward. ***The unions, not the bosses, should have full control over whether and how to discipline workers.***

With unemployment rising and fewer jobs available, there will be more divide-and-conquer hostility to women in a "man's job." Trump has warned employers who receive government contracts to purge women and black people or else, under the bigoted presumption they were hired without "merit" (see Executive Order 14173). The purpose of the "anti-DEI" purge is to weaken the entire working class.

We need to fight for jobs for all and a shorter workweek with no loss in pay. As long as unemployment is accepted and there is a scramble for a shrinking piece of the pie, many workingmen will see women coworkers as competitors. Mobilizing workers to fight for more for everyone will undermine craft prejudices that cause skilled tradesmen to see themselves as the "chosen few" and to be hostile to outsiders. While fighting against the bosses' macho speed-up schemes and demanding more job opportunities, the building trades unions should launch aggressive campaigns to recruit women and minority workers.

The way out of this dog-eat-dog world is for all workers in the building trades to put the interests of our class first. Organizing all the unorganized and defending women workers as equals on the job would strengthen the fighting capacity of the unions as a whole. That's the best way to honor Amber and Outi. ■

Amber Czech

Portraits by Cindy

2005-2025

When Auto Workers Defended Immigrants

1 November 2025

To the Editor of *WV*:

Facing the current wave of anti-immigrant terror, labor militants are angry and looking for a way to stop Trump's masked ICE thugs. I thought it might be helpful to recount an example from the mid-1970s, when militant autoworkers in New Jersey successfully headed off a deportation raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), known as "la Migra."

The Ford plant in Mahwah, New Jersey, had a diverse workforce: about a third were white, mainly from upstate New York; a third were black residents of Harlem or Brooklyn, and a third were immigrants from Haiti, Dominican Republic, and other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, many of whom were undocumented. The Mahwah workers were a feisty lot, with wildcat strikes and work stoppages not uncommon. And there was a lively political life at the plant, with various left-wing tendencies representing the U.S. left as well as the Dominican and Haitian communities.

In United Auto Workers Local 906, our small Militant Solidarity Caucus (MSC), led by supporters of the Spartacist League, had won support among much of the plant's workforce, publishing a regular newsletter in English, French and Spanish. The class-struggle program we fought for included defense of immigrant workers and for full citizenship rights for all foreign workers. The MSC had won wide respect after standing up to a vicious anonymous redbaiting attack. As a candidate for union convention delegate, I was attacked for having traveled to Cuba, and accused of being trained in guerrilla warfare to "kill American soldiers." The local UAW bureaucrats echoed this redbaiting campaign, looking quite stupid when it was exposed as a ploy by Ford's labor relations management.

When the word came that an INS deportation raid on the Mahwah plant was imminent, we decided to act. A senior Spartacist leader advised us to go watch the film *The Godfather*, so we'd know how to make the union leadership "an offer they can't refuse." To meet with the local union bureaucrats, we sent a delegation which included a few of the key leaders of the militant black workers from the body shop. These guys were the recognized shopfloor leaders who led most walkouts: whenever the welding robots in the body shop stopped, the whole plant ground to a halt.

Our caucus had exposed the local union bureaucrats for their craven support for Ford's redbaiting (and for selling bedsheets made by scab labor!). With the support of the most militant black and immigrant workers in the plant, we demanded that the official union take a stand to defend our foreign-born coworkers. Feeling the pressure, the local union leaders were forced to give Ford an ultimatum: if la Migra comes in the plant, they would pull out the entire workforce. Ford management got the message, and the INS stayed away from the plant.

This was an important victory protecting the hundreds of undocumented immigrant workers at the Mahwah plant. Hopefully it can also serve as a useful example for militant unionists today, showing that even a small nucleus with a clear program can catalyze effective labor solidarity to defend our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Comradely Greetings,
Lisa D.

***WV* replies:**

We thank Lisa for her contribution. ■

Supporting Russia Won't Defeat U.S. Imperialism

10 October 2025

Hi,

If you want to present a serious argument on the issue, that would be fine, and I can respond.

Those who oppose the US war in Ukraine are not "Russia supporters." We oppose U.S./NATO aggression against Russia. That is the issue, not "supporting Russia."

The parts of Ukraine that Russia is annexing voted to separate from Ukraine to be independent or voted to become part of Russia. That is their democratic right. I would assume you know about the votes and I would assume you recognize their democratic right to separate. We think all people should support these former parts of Ukraine right to act on their self-determination. You call that putting them in "Russian chains?"

You say "U.S. imperialism must be defeated, but not every blow to U.S. imperialism is progressive. In order for it to be progressive, the international proletariat must come out on the other end in a better position to bring down the imperialist order." Then you say, without providing any substantiation, "A Russian victory in Ukraine would do nothing of the sort."

The war in Ukraine is U.S./NATO vs. Russia. A defeat for U.S./NATO is a victory for all forces opposing the U.S. empire. That is made clear by the number of countries, mostly progressive ones, that defend Russia in the war, and the many that do not defend U.S./NATO. A defeat for the U.S. would be a great victory for that block of countries the U.S. empire sees as enemies, as targets.

You say a Russian victory "would be a setback to the U.S., no doubt." To be clear, you are saying a defeat or setback for the U.S. empire doesn't mean it is progressive. So according to you, we can be neutral in some U.S. war on another country? You really want to say that? Do you think breaking free of U.S. imperialism in one part of the world does not open the door for other countries to try the same in some way? That is not progressive? You are saying a weakening of the U.S. empire does not mean this is a good thing.

Russia has not "devastated" Ukraine. U.S./Israel devastated Gaza. If Russia wanted to devastate Ukraine, it could. But so far it hasn't. Who created the situation in Ukraine? U.S. imperialism did. They organized the coup in 2014, they started the war on the Russian Ukrainians in eastern Ukraine, they continued the war when Russia made a peace agreement in 2022. Why are you blaming Russia for what U.S. imperialism has done?

Russian self-determination was not a question? The U.S. has been explicit for

continued on page 4

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Notice to Our Readers

***Workers Vanguard* will be published four times in 2026.**

NYC

SEIU Tops Shaft EMS Workers

Hospital Militants Fight Against Layoffs

15 December 2025

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

Thank you for your interest in the recent work of Hospital Workers Building Union Power (HWBUP). A lot of 1199 members are upset with the way the union is run, as the leadership is always ready to do the bidding of management. A prime example of this was the firing of 18 EMS workers at Lenox Hill Hospital. We fought to prevent the firings and build opposition to the leadership, which didn't want to do anything.

We sought to show that by fighting, we can make the union do what it is meant to do—fight against the attacks on the workers. Our leaflets aimed to give direction to the deep anger at the union leadership. We distributed hundreds of leaflets in less than two weeks. The leadership refused to budge—they didn't even mobilize workers for a picket on November 3—and the EMS workers were fired four days later. The key lesson from this outrage is that the 1199 leadership needs to be replaced by hospital workers who want to fight for our class against the bosses. We want to draw these workers into the committee. We welcome you reprinting our leaflets to shine a spotlight on this work and want other working-class organizations to do likewise. Check us out at linktr.ee/hwbup_nyc.

In struggle,
Edie G. for HWBUP

* * *

An attack on EMS is an ATTACK ON US ALL

SEIU: WHERE ARE YOU?

October 30

The attack on EMS cannot be taken lying down. The fight to defend jobs and services is going to take the united action of all workers. That includes those within the walls of Lenox Hill Hospital. But many workers on the inside don't even know that their coworkers' jobs on the outside are on the chopping block—or that a picket to defend those jobs is planned for Nov. 3. The question is: Where is the 1199 leadership and what is the plan to defend these workers and build the picket?

The 1199 leadership's current plan of keeping things vague and workers out of the loop is a losing strategy. And the resulting loss of jobs and trucks will have a huge ripple effect throughout the city, its working class and healthcare. Workers on the inside must start asking their delegates how the ranks can build the pickets for Nov. 3 and demand a real plan that will ensure there are no job and truck losses. The Northwell bosses are looking for any opportunity to break the union. Workers uniting and successfully stopping the firing of EMTs would put all Lenox Hill workers in a better position to defend themselves and strengthen the union.

Everyone out to the Nov. 3 picket!

* * *

An attack on EMS is an ATTACK ON US ALL

SEIU: What We Should Do

November 1

The 1199 leadership has finally called on workers to come out to the rally and defend EMS. EMS needs any and all support but what we really need are strong pickets that will defend services, jobs and trucks. A big crowd and strong defense will show union power and give workers the confidence they need to build for more, larger and stronger pickets. It also shows that workers and the community will not just eat this attack. If the picket doesn't have the numbers it needs, it will end up a bust. This will just demoralize workers and show the weakness of the union to the Northwell bosses, giving them the green light to stomp not only on EMS but all workers.

Workers are already on edge because of the worsening conditions. The firing of EMS is only telling them that the situation will get worse before it gets better. But how do things get better for workers? Or at least how do workers maintain what they have now? The 1199 leadership needs to push back against the attacks on workers. That means mobilizing the ranks when the Northwell bosses try to squeeze the workforce to maximize their profits. The union rally is the perfect place to do that. So while it's necessary for the leadership to call on the membership to come out, a lot more should've been done.

The point of this rally being as big as possible is to defend EMS but also to spark a broader fight against all the attacks happening within Lenox Hill Hospital. Workers inside are being ground down by short-staffing, stagnant wages and a management looking for any opportunity to punish the workforce. But the 1199 leadership is doing all it can to contain the fight for EMS to one five-hour picket. They inform workers at the last minute to come out because they know organizing workers to actually win means going against the bosses and their profits. They can't do this while telling workers there can be partnership between them and the Northwell administration. So, to the 1199 leadership, what's it going to be? A real fight to defend against the attacks on EMS or to let workers continue to be on the losing end of a partnership only meant to keep the bosses on top?

Fight for every job! Dump the no-strike clause and the partnership strategy! Build the unions—Organize the unorganized! We can only rely on our own strength!

Everyone out to the Nov. 3 picket!

* * *

EMS Left Out To Dry, Who's Next?

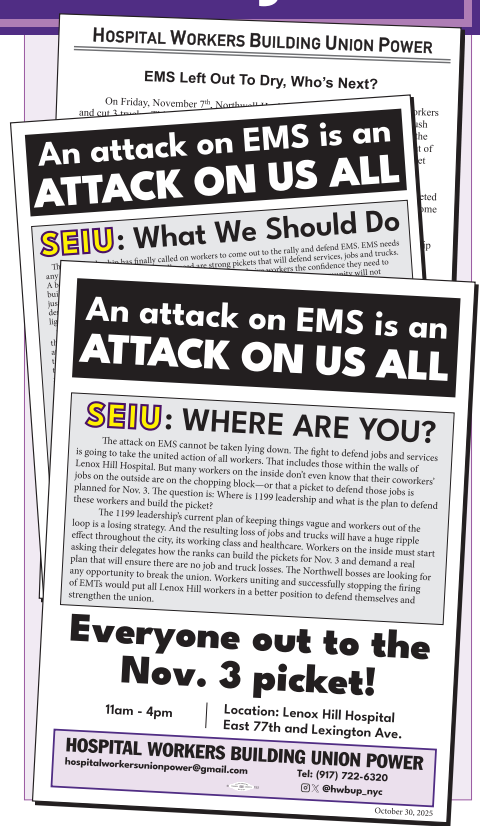
November 13

On Friday, November 7th, Northwell Health successfully fired 18 EMS workers and cut 3 trucks. This is all part of a plan not only to maximize profits, but to crush 1199 as Northwell wants to become a union-free healthcare system. Where was the 1199 leadership? Almost nowhere to be found. When they did pop their heads out of the backrooms that they make deals with management in, it was to call for a picket they purposely did little to build for.

The November 3rd picket should've been organized as a real defense of targeted EMS workers. That means calling on the community and Lenox Hill workers to come out and demand no cuts to services or jobs. Instead, the picket became a cheap performance by the bureaucracy, acting as if they were doing something to defend EMS. Make no mistake, the loss in jobs and trucks is the fault of the 1199 leadership that did everything they could to clamp down on any true intention to fight back against the cuts. This anti-union betrayal by the 1199 leadership has given the Northwell bosses the green light to continue their attacks on workers and services. Let it be clear to all workers: 18 EMS workers losing their jobs is a defeat and an attack on the entire workforce. And all workers must brace themselves for what's in store next as the union bureaucracy continues to make deals with management that screws us over and puts the union as a whole in danger.

But there is a way to stop or at least lessen the damage from the attacks that are on the way. The way to start is by replacing the current leadership with people who actually want to fight for workers and defend the union. Time and time again the current leadership has given members excuse after pathetic excuse as to why they should eat a certain punishment or attack. Anyone reading this now probably has a story proving this statement true. What's also true is that the union leadership forcing workers to eat abuse has eroded the confidence of 1199 members that the union can be a force for defense. It's critical now more than ever to regain that confidence and rebuild the union to what it should be—a tool for workers defense. But this isn't what the current union tops are fighting for. They're too busy fooling workers into thinking that they have a common interest with the bosses. This garbage is only weakening the union and making workers into victims. The 18 EMS workers fired last Friday is the clearest example of that.

There needs to be a fight to reinstate these EMS workers. But if the 1199 leadership isn't willing to defend jobs and trucks, how could they fight to get them back? Enough is really enough! To the 1199 workforce: take back your union and put in leaders who will fight! Get EMS workers back to their jobs!■



Hospital Workers Building Union Power
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Defend Unions, Defend Immigrants!

Drop All Charges Against David Huerta!

As thousands of National Guard troops, Marines, FBI and ICE agents were invading Los Angeles in Trump's war on immigrants, SEIU California president David Huerta was arrested on June 6 for standing up for immigrant workers during a deportation raid. Originally slapped with a federal conspiracy rap, he now faces a one-year prison sentence on trumped-up misdemeanor charges of obstructing federal officers.

This is a blatant attempt to behead the leadership of a union representing over 700,000 workers. The government wants to scare off organized labor from defending their immigrant brothers and sisters, necessitating a fightback by all workers and oppressed. As Huerta declared, "These charges are baseless, they are attempting to silence anyone who dares to speak out, organize or demand justice."

The SEIU leaders have relied on legal defense and the verbal support of capitalist politicians when they should be throwing the weight of the union ranks behind their president. The government is intent on sending the message that nothing will stand in the way of ICE kidnappings. As Huerta's case shows, it's not just immigrants, but also unions that are in Trump's crosshairs. We must show that we won't be silenced! Unionists, leftists, community activists: To maximize pressure on the government to drop the charges, ***fill the courtroom! An injury to one is an injury to all! Justice for David Huerta!*** As we go to press, the date of Huerta's trial is in flux. To stay up to date, check out @spartacistla on Instagram.■

Crane/MediaNews Group

SEIU California head David Huerta at federal courthouse in L.A. after release from ICE custody, June 9.

Venezuela...

(continued from page 1)

together has made the thought of another forever war incomprehensible to workers. And this mixture has only deepened the demoralization in our class.

Why War Against Venezuela Would Be Bad for Workers

There are those of us in the U.S. working class who want to fight back. We are horrified by these developments and know that a Trump victory in Venezuela would not be good for the people there or the peoples of Latin America and the U.S. The pressure and nightmarish quality of what's unfolding have an even greater effect on those of us who are Hispanic and have family back home. But with the current beaten-down position of the working class and the influence of the ruling class to shape opinions on Venezuela, how do we convince our coworkers, who haven't mobilized much in their own defense, to stand in defense of Venezuela? Convincing workers to come to their feet requires showing how the falling of Venezuela to Trump would have a direct and negative impact on our everyday reality.

First, we should start with what the ruling class needs to invade Venezuela and take down Maduro. Every war requires soldiers. And we all know the ruling class never sends their kids to die as expendables for the rich man's war. They reserve that luxury only for the working class and oppressed. Most workers sent off to war come back horrifically maimed or psychologically damaged, if they make it out alive. Then they are left out to dry, while the war hawks profit off the ravaging of Venezuelans and the American workers dragged into war.

Every war needs to be financed, and the main (unwilling) contributors are once again the working class. We are already getting squeezed from all sides and have been for some time. Most of us don't even live close to where we work because we've been priced out of our neighborhoods. That's not to mention the outrageous price of groceries, while the education and healthcare systems are rotting out. War with Venezuela would only make our current economic situation worse, since the ruling class would make us pay for their conquests by draining social programs we rely on and hitting our pockets.

The ruling class using the "war on drugs" is a dangerous precedent. Since the '80s the ruling class has pumped drugs into our neighborhoods and mainly punished the black masses, who have been rounded up and thrown in jail. At the same time, black and working-class neighborhoods were gutted and ghettoized. This will be ramped up even more in the middle of mass firings and rising unemployment, since the ruling class has nothing to offer the black masses except for ghettos and prisons. The "war on drugs" blowing up again in our neighborhoods isn't too big of a jump, especially when we are seeing the beginnings of it now. It is being done in the name of the fight against crime, which Trump is itching to mobilize the National Guard for.

The aggression against Venezuela is tied to our political situation as well, as a victory for the neocolonial masters will only lead to more encroachment on our political rights and ability to do union work such as organizing working-class struggles. Almost every U.S. war abroad includes the stripping away of rights and heightened repression against the population at home. Bolstering the surveillance state, spying on and punishing union militants are the usual repressive tactics. Most recently, we have seen the brutal repression of anti-ICE and pro-Palestinian protesters fighting against anti-immigrant reaction and genocide. These acts aren't accidents but are what U.S. imperialism needs to do here in order to continue trampling on the rest of the world. The Venezuelan masses giving a black eye to U.S. imperialism would loosen the ruling class's grip on the working class here and might inspire workers to fight in defense of themselves. If that does happen, it would definitely shake up the ruling class's confidence that they can get away with victimizing the masses.

U.S. Imperialism Is the Main Enemy

While we American workers must take a clear side with Venezuela and the Maduro administration, it doesn't mean giving the regime political support. This is on the minds of many workers who don't want to see Venezuela's invasion but don't like Maduro's heavy-handed measures. It's true that the regime is repressive and that its repression of the Venezuelan masses must be opposed. But it is crucial to defend the regime against the imperialists because if the U.S. gets its way, both the Venezuelan masses and the American working class will pay a heavy price.

This doesn't mean that the regime shouldn't be done away with. It should be, but only at the hands of the revolutionary Venezuelan working class. Such an outcome would inspire the Latin American masses and U.S. working class to do the same. This is especially important in countries where the native ruling class works in coalition with U.S. imperialism, draining the wealth and leaving the oppressed masses in destitution. The successful spread of the fight through the region would create the cracks necessary to bring imperialism down once and for all.

U.S. Coast Guard

Pirates of the Caribbean: U.S. military commandeers oil tanker off coast of Venezuela, December 10.

If the U.S. puts down Maduro, there will be a right-wing realignment in Latin America. Already, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile are ruled by right-wing U.S. puppets. This realignment could cause major destabilization of the region, as the imperialists' puppets allow them to plunder from the land and the people. Imperialist intervention in Venezuela aims to do just that: take over the oil fields and other heavy industries and place them into the hands of the oligarchs and the imperialists. This would be disastrous for the Venezuelan working and oppressed masses. They would have their conditions thrown back to the same level as before the 1989 Caracazo uprising, causing more to flee to countries like Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. and creating more tensions.

It's not like we haven't seen this before. The U.S. imperialists always manufacture opposition to foreign leaders who they claim are committing crimes against humanity. We can look to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria just to start. It's true that the leaders of these countries were repressive. But the imperialists' line of bringing "freedom" to oppressed peoples was just a cover to eliminate leaders who stood in their way. The result? All these countries were left in ruins and generations of people were kept in subjugation, while the conditions of the American working class have deteriorated. That's why it is necessary to stand in defense of Venezuela and Maduro ***against*** U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the working class and oppressed peoples of the world.

WV Photo

New York, November 22: Spartacists join rally against U.S. aggression toward Venezuela outside Trump Building.

What to Do in the Unions

Right now, working-class militants should look to bring these arguments to our coworkers in order to win them to the perspective that it is in their interest to defend Venezuela. This might seem basic, but it is essential to counter the passivity of the unions under leaders who have overwhelmingly remained silent on U.S. aggression or told workers that what's good for imperialism is good for them. Building an anti-imperialist attitude in the class is necessary preparation to transform union policy and ultimately the unions themselves.

Antiwar sentiment can go in many different directions. Some union bureaucrats are already trying to direct it toward the Democrats, who aren't interested in peace or saving Venezuela—they're the ones who imposed the worst sanctions on the country. Pacifist appeals are not going to stop the imperialists either. Militants should work toward the mobilization of union contingents at antiwar protests that openly side with Venezuela against the U.S. Each small step taken or argument made will only help increase sentiment in our ranks to come to Venezuela's defense and point workers here toward the need for labor action against war and for an anti-imperialist alliance with the working and toiling masses of Latin America.■

Ukraine...

(continued from page 2)

years, before the war, on militarily surrounding, threatening, and dividing up Russia, like U.S. also has been aiming to do with China. It has been explicit about removing the elected government of Russia. And you want to say that has nothing to do with trying to deny Russian self-determination?

Thanks,
Stan

***WV* replies:** We agree that the issue at hand is the need to oppose U.S./NATO aggression and defend oppressed countries trying to break free of the U.S. empire. The difference between us is how to achieve these goals. In the Russia-Ukraine war, your starting point is to look to Russian military might to weaken U.S. imperialism. Ours is to place the Ukrainian and Russian working classes in the best position possible to challenge imperialism and overthrow both the pro-imperialist Ukrainian rulers and the Russian oligarchs. The workers have the power and interest to force a peace that safeguards the national interests of both nations, but your letter doesn't breathe a word about the working class.

You argue that the Russian war effort is an act of self-defense, claiming that the U.S. has been explicit about violating Russia's self-determination, dividing it up and removing its elected government. But at no point in the war have U.S. forces breached Russia's national borders or threatened its independence. To the contrary, Trump is not pushing regime change in Moscow, but rather giving Putin a green light to dismember Ukraine. Russian forces are bombing apartment buildings in Kyiv and massacring Ukrainian civilians in towns hundreds of miles from the front, yet you still maintain that Russia is not devastating Ukraine! You also don't acknowledge Putin's oft-repeated goal of annexing Ukrainian territory. As he declared in June: "I have said many times that the Russian and Ukrainian people are one nation, in fact. In this sense, all of Ukraine is ours."

If the war were about the self-determination for Russians in the Donbass, Russia's military intervention would have a very different, and entirely supportable, character. But that is not the case. Russia is moving to annex Ukrainian lands well beyond that region, inflaming national chauvinism in the Ukrainian population. At the same time, the war has intensified nationalism on the Russian side, helping to weld Russian workers to their rulers and driving a wedge between them and the Ukrainian workers. Under the current circumstances, a Russian victory will rob Ukrainians of their national independence.

You insist that the war in Ukraine is between U.S./NATO imperialism and Russia. However, the U.S. is not fighting on the ground in Ukraine. The conflict pits Ukrainian against Russian, not Russian against American soldiers. Despite Russia's battlefield gains, the U.S. has not suffered the kind of destabilization that would result if the sons and daughters of the U.S. working class were coming home in body bags, as happened in the Vietnam War.

That's just one reason why a Russian victory would not substantially weaken the U.S. empire, as you claim. While the U.S. has failed in its original aim of arming Ukraine to weaken Russia, Trump is not escalating, but moving to cut his losses because U.S. imperialism does not have vital interests in Ukraine. This will facilitate the U.S. drive to build up its military forces elsewhere—from Latin America to Asia. At the same time, Trump is preparing to steal Ukrainian mineral assets, regardless of a Russian victory.

You portray a Russian triumph as progressive. But Putin's objective is not to challenge U.S. world domination, but rather to extend Russia's reach as a regional power and bulwark of reaction in Europe. And are Russia's military gains a great victory for countries in Washington's crosshairs? Take the case of Iran. Iran has stood by Russia in the war and supplied it with drone technology, but what has Iran gained from this? Neither Russia's battlefield victories nor Iran's military support deterred the U.S. and Israel from bombing Iran last June. In the face of this onslaught, Russia didn't lift a finger to defend Iran, preferring instead to cut deals with Trump. This is proof enough that Russia is not playing a progressive role in world affairs.

Ever since the U.S./NATO imperialists provoked the war, we have called on the workers here to oppose arms shipments to the Ukrainian forces and fought to unite the Russian and Ukrainian working classes to advance the cause of social and national liberation for both nations. If the Ukrainian and Russian armies were to fraternize and turn their weapons against their own leaders—admittedly a remote prospect at present—the resulting echo of class solidarity could resound throughout Europe, where mass discontent runs deep. In Poland and the Baltic countries, with their past history of brutal Russian domination, unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers would help erode anti-Russian sentiments and break the workers from illusions in imperialism. This is anything but the neutrality you accuse us of. It is the only way to weaken and destroy the U.S. imperialist empire to emancipate all of humanity.■

OUTRAGE! Killer Cop Walks

Steven Taylor: Justice Denied

WV Photo; Family photo (inset)

Alameda County Courthouse, October 31: OPA and others join Taylor family at protest before hearing on charges against killer cop.

OAKLAND—On December 12, Alameda County dropped charges against San Leandro cop Jason Fletcher, who shot Steven Taylor pointblank at a crowded Walmart five years ago. In the midst of a mental health crisis, Taylor, a 33-year-old black father of three, had tried to walk out of the store with a baseball bat and tent without paying. As directed by security guards, Steven was waiting by the rolling carts near the door when Fletcher arrived. Forty seconds later, Steven was fatally shot.

This horrible injustice is a case study in how the cops, courts and politicians work hand in hand to ensure killer cops walk, and why the movement against police brutality needs to be rebuilt. Taylor's family has tried every legal avenue. It was enough to get the courts to put up a facade of pursuing justice, but not enough to actually change the outcome and put the cop away.

After George Floyd's lynching provoked international protest, then Alameda County D.A. Nancy O'Malley, who had never before brought charges against a cop, charged Fletcher with "voluntary manslaughter." Then O'Malley just sat on the case. Nearly three years later, when Pamela Price was elected D.A. on a police reform platform, Fletcher still hadn't been tried. The courts took the Taylor case out of her hands, claiming political bias. Price simply filed an appeal that predictably went nowhere and called it a day. As for the other grieving families who looked to Price with hope, they were hung out to dry. Of the eight cases she chose to "review," only one ended up in court: Mario Gonzalez's. The charges against the cops who killed him were dismissed.

There were other avenues she could have pursued to win justice for Taylor, like opening the police archives on his case, Gonzalez's and the seven other victims whom she claimed to be fighting for. Exposing the details of the cops' crimes to the public could have created the groundswell necessary to fight back against the never-ending cop atrocities. The Partisan Defense Committee wrote Price to demand she do just this. But she did nothing. Price was recalled for supposedly being "soft on crime" in November 2024 but is now running to regain the office. Her inaction and betrayals during her first term are reason enough to not support her re-election campaign.

Now, with the BLM movement safely in the rearview mirror and the political climate having shifted to the right, the charges against Fletcher have been dropped by agreement of the judge, defense lawyers and prosecution. Reform schemes for oversight committees, cutting the budget and begging politicians to do the right thing did not move the needle on police killings, nor did they secure convictions in the vast majority of brutality cases, as the Taylor case vividly shows. Getting the capitalists to put away one of their thugs in blue requires mobilizing a force that will make them fear the consequences if they don't.

We must take the fight for justice into our own hands. The cops and courts want us to forget Steven Taylor so that he becomes another victim of cop terror lost to time. We must not let this happen. Take his case to your communities, workplaces, unions, churches, etc. to burn it into everyone's memories and rally broader support for the fight to open the police archives and get some justice.

We need to rebuild the movement against police brutality, looking to those who will see justice through to the end and won't scramble to reverse any progress as soon as the headlines change. We must mobilize the working class, which both can force the hand of the capitalists and has a real interest in ending police brutality and racial oppression. ***Rebuild the movement against cop brutality on a class-struggle basis! Open the police archives!*** ■

Duprey...

(continued from page 1)

the justified hatred that black people and Latinos in the Bronx have for the cops. The main reason this case hasn't just been thrown out already is that OPA and BLM Greater NY have been organizing protests to keep the pressure up. This will be even more urgent for the trial. They want to give Duran a pass and we're not gonna let that happen! Let's show them what New York is made of!

No matter which way one looks, the cards are stacked against us. We are battered day in and day out while trying to stay alive in this unlivable city. To make things even worse, the cops are using us for target practice. This year alone, cops have killed at least 1,200 people nationwide, and the number keeps climbing. Every working-class New Yorker knows how out of control the cops are. What happened to Eric Duprey could've easily happened to their kid or even themselves.

We desperately need to defend ourselves. Showing up to the courthouse in force and demanding that the killer cop spend the rest of his miserable life behind bars sends the message that we will not tolerate these marauding thugs who lay siege to our neighborhoods. We must rely on ourselves and other working people and not the courts, which are obviously siding with their cop brethren.

All out January 14! Demand justice for Eric Duprey and all victims of police brutality! We must fight to expose all the cops' crimes. Get out the word—post this article or your own statement on social media, go out into the community and get as many people as possible to the courthouse.

8:30 a.m., Wednesday, January 14
Bronx Supreme Criminal Court
265 East 161st St., Bronx

Justice for Sonya!

WV Photo

On October 29, Chicago OPA activists, including family members of victims of cop terror, joined Sonya Massey's family and other supporters in protest at the trial of killer cop Sean Grayson in Peoria, Illinois. Grayson murdered Sonya for the "crime" of holding a pot of boiling water in her kitchen. While also facing first-degree murder charges, the cop was convicted only of second-degree murder, for which he could just get probation.

Massey's father, James Wilburn, summed up this whitewash: "There's a difference in this country when you have my skin color and Grayson's skin color. We need serious justice, not a miscarriage of justice that happened here in Peoria." The cop has already filed for a new trial to overturn his conviction. The fight for justice for Sonya must continue. Jail the killer cop!

PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE

36th Holiday Appeal

Free All Class-War Prisoners!

The Holiday Appeal raises money for the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund, which sends monthly stipends to people in custody for standing up to racist capitalism and imperialism, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and Xinachtli (Alvaro Hernandez).

CHICAGO
Sunday, January 25
3 to 7 p.m.
The Plant
1400 W. 46th St., Chicago
Information: (312) 563-0442

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday, January 24
3 to 6 p.m.
St. Mark's Church in the Bowery
131 E. 10th St., Manhattan
(entrance on 11th St. near 2nd Ave.)
Information: (212) 406-4252

OAKLAND
Saturday, January 24
3 to 6 p.m.
First Congregational Church of Oakland, Reidenbach Hall
2501 Harrison St. (at 27th St.)
Information: (510) 839-0852

LOS ANGELES
Saturday, January 31
3 to 6 p.m.
First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, Severance Room
2936 W. 8th St., Los Angeles
Information: (213) 380-8897

Tickets $10 • students/unemployed $5

(212) 406-4252 | partisandefense@earthlink.net | partisandefense.org
𝕏@partisandefense | partisan_defense_committee

The World at a Turning Point

Jakarta, Indonesia, August 25: Cops crack down on protest outside House of Representatives, calling for parliament to dissolve (center). Trump (top right) dispatched U.S. aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford (bottom) to Caribbean as part of escalating U.S. military campaign against Venezuela, including recent seizure of two oil tankers.

Brendan Smialowski/AFP; Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP; U.S. Strategic Command

Reprinted below is a November 13 Spartacist *(English-language edition) supplement.*

Where is the world going? Are we witnessing "a worldwide chain of mass movements, insurrections, uprisings and revolutions," as the Revolutionary Communist International (RCI) claims? Or is "the Land of Lincoln…being transformed by Trump and his arrogant satraps into the land of a would-be Führer," as the Socialist Equality Party believes? Maybe it's a bit of both, and "in the coming months, we could see a combined process of wars, revolutions and counterrevolutions which might open a *pre-revolutionary or even revolutionary world situation*" (Revolutionary Communist International Tendency). If Trotskyists have conflicting views on where we are heading, they aren't alone. Everywhere you look you'll find comments about "the rise of fascism," "the collapse of the dollar," "stock bubbles," "the AI revolution" and "world war." There is no coherent picture, and the whole thing is dizzying.

If there is so much confusion, it's because the world is rapidly approaching a decisive ***turning point***—and like the calm before the storm, we're receiving a lot of mixed signals. But the question remains, where are we heading? To answer this as Marxists, we cannot just jump from headline to headline or look at the latest opinion polls. We need to understand the inner dynamics of world events and distinguish the dominant currents from secondary countercurrents. This method does not rule out mistakes or unforeseen events, but it provides the only way to avoid being swept up in impressionism.

We in the International Communist League believe this is the dawn of a ***reactionary period*** of capitalist offensive, in which the living conditions of working people will be attacked on a scale not seen in decades. This is not to say that it will be a one-sided battle and we should simply stand by and give up. Quite the contrary. It calls for steeled resolve, defensive actions and serious preparation. The stronger the resistance, the quicker the working class can go on the offensive. But to do this effectively, advanced workers and the socialist movement need a correct understanding of the rhythm and direction of events.

Unfortunately, as the examples above suggest, most leftists have a view of the world that is totally at odds with reality, not least regarding the dominant moods in the working class. Mostly they are turning left, agitating for general strikes and uprisings, just as the world is moving to the right. To avoid a painful clash with reality, communists need to take off their partisan blinders and ***seriously*** study and debate the current world situation.

PART I: THE MAIN TRENDS OF WORLD POLITICS

To understand what's going on we need to start from the top. The main factor shaping world politics is the increasing gap between the dominant role the U.S. plays on the world stage and its declining economic power. The uncontested dominance of the U.S. in the 1990s and 2000s ensured an oppressive yet stable global order. Now that the centripetal force of the U.S. is weakening, more and more regional conflicts are breaking out, the global economy is teetering and the U.S. rulers are tearing up old rules in a desperate attempt to maintain their position. This is where Donald Trump comes in.

What the Hell Is Trump Up to?

Over the last year Trump has shaken world politics, attacking friend and foe alike. But is there any logic to his actions, or are they totally incoherent? Many commentators have mulled over this question. The tricky thing is that the answer is both. Trump is a moron who obviously doesn't have a coherent plan, but he is a moron with strong class instincts. He understands that the U.S. has a large reserve of hard power and that it needs to do something drastic to halt its decline. So like any good real estate tycoon, he is blackmailing and bullying his way to any advantage he can get. He attacks, then observes the reaction. If he bites off more than he can chew, he backs off. If he senses weakness, he doubles down. This approach is chaotic, but it has been effective in squeezing concessions out of dependent countries of the Global South as well as U.S. allies. However, it has proved useless in pushing back against Russia and China, both of which have the material means to stand up to American threats.

The problem Trump has is that for all the power of the U.S. state, he cannot reshape the global economy as he wishes. Nor can he reverse decades of relative economic decline—at least, not in the short term. This explains why so much has remained the same despite Trump's antics. Fundamentally it is objective forces, the economy and the outcome of wars, that are the main drivers of history. Short of nuclear war, there is nothing Trump can do to reverse Russia winning the war in Ukraine. Nor is he currently in a position to choke off the Chinese economy with tariffs.

Otto von Bismarck once said, "A statesman cannot create anything himself. He must wait and listen until he hears the steps of God sounding through events; then leap up and grasp the hem of his garment." Trump isn't wasting any time waiting; he grasps any straw he can. But great shocks are on the horizon, and as history lurches forward Trump will be at the helm of the most powerful state in the world. As such, the political current he represents, the aggressive right-wing populism of a decaying imperialist ruling class, will most likely play a commanding role in reshaping the world order.

China Isn't Taking Over

What about China? Will it not play a key role in the coming shocks to the global system? China, and its role on the global stage, is one of the most important yet misunderstood factors in world politics. China is seen by most as a rising superpower intent on supplanting the U.S. Some think this will lead to progress, while others are horrified at the prospect. Both are fundamentally wrong. While it is true that economically and socially China's rise has been phenomenal and that the country does challenge U.S. domination in a range of areas, the Communist Party of China (CPC) does ***not*** seek confrontation with the U.S. imperialist system. Rather, it lives under the deluded idea that it can continue its gradual development ***within*** this hostile system.

One does not need a full analysis of the Chinese state (see "The Class Nature of China," *Spartacist* No. 69, August 2024) to notice that something isn't right with the narrative of an aggressive, rising China. If China is the young and dynamic pretender

to the throne of world domination, why is it the U.S. and not China that is blackmailing and attacking every country on Earth? Why hasn't China built an alliance to confront the U.S.? Why isn't it flooding Iran, Venezuela and Palestine with modern weapons systems to repel imperialist aggression? No, instead of any of this, the CPC continues to drone on about win-win cooperation and preserving the multilateral order—while its main guarantor, the U.S., is tearing it to shreds.

Defenders of the CPC and proponents of BRICS often argue that China is being smart by not directly challenging the U.S. They contend that China is slowly but surely building the foundations of a new, multipolar economic order. This view is wrong on two counts. First, it denies that there is a fundamentally antagonistic relationship between China's social regime, established by an ***anti-capitalist revolution***, and the world ***capitalist economy***. In the long run, capitalist economic relations, domestic and international, will not favor the CPC's "socialism with Chinese characteristics" but undermine and destroy it. The second mistake is to think that the U.S. will simply dig its own grave, guaranteeing China's rise. This downplays the danger posed by a decaying U.S. empire. Left to its own devices, the U.S. will spread misery, chaos and war on an untold scale. China cannot insulate itself from this. Its own development, and that of humanity, demands that the U.S. empire be ended as swiftly as possible.

If one looks at the world situation with the slightest degree of objectivity, it is obvious that China is playing a ***conservative*** role, wary of shocks and conflicts, while the U.S. is the ***main agent*** of disruption and chaos. That is not how a rising imperialist power behaves; it is how a bureaucratically ruled workers state like the Soviet Union behaved. No doubt China will play an important role in the coming period of turbulent world politics. But because of its conservative political nature, the CPC will continue to play second fiddle to Trump, reacting to events rather than shaping them.

Gen Z Revolutions?

For most on the left, the rising tide of reaction is matched by an equally rising tide of popular struggles. The RCI speaks of a "Red September" and a "dramatic turn in the world situation." This optimistic analysis is largely based on the wave of uprisings in the semicolonial world that have been coined the Gen Z Revolutions. Over the last several months, countries such as Nepal, Indonesia, Madagascar, Morocco, Peru and Tanzania have all seen explosions of discontent.

Every movement has had its own distinct political dynamics. But they have all been fundamentally caused by the deteriorating conditions for youth in a world where social mobility and development are distant prospects. Previously, the U.S. order fostered illusions in economic and democratic progress while at the same time using emigration and NGO money as pressure valves. This is all over. With no prospect for a viable future, social explosion has become the only outlet.

The recent uprisings have been met with massive repression (Indonesia, Morocco, Peru, etc.) and in the case of Madagascar resulted in a new regime led by the military. For now, a sharp turn toward the left does not appear to have taken place in these countries. And on the scale of global politics, the Gen Z revolutions remain a ***subtrend*** that has not halted the general drift toward imperialist reaction.

The main reason for this is that these popular explosions have not found political vehicles that could channel their energies in a progressive direction. Overwhelmingly, the left has not been able to offer leadership to the mass uprisings. In Nepal, the uprising was in fact directed ***against*** the various communist parties that have governed the country. In Sri Lanka, the mass uprising of 2022 eventually brought a communist-led coalition to power, but already it has betrayed the aspirations of the masses by bowing down to the IMF.

The problems caused by a lack of leadership in these uprisings are compounded by the fact that the organized working class has not played a major role. In fact, despite the social explosions in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the industrial working class of the Global South, the overwhelming majority of the world proletariat, has not yet shown signs of increased militancy. This is in no small part due to the worsening economic prospects for industrial workers. Were the proletariat to flex its muscles in countries like China, Mexico or Indonesia, this would bring much more social weight to the struggle and could dramatically shift world politics.

These observations do not in any way downplay the ***revolutionary potential*** in the Global South, including in countries peripheral to the world economy. As the world sinks deeper into the chaos of the decaying American empire, the pressure on these countries will increase: fostering what will most likely be the most important revolutionary current of the coming period. The recent uprisings were largely spontaneous and politically amorphous. But as repression and reformist solutions fail to contain popular anger, the most advanced elements will draw lessons.

It is the task of Marxists to accelerate this process by helping revolutionary fighters of the Global South learn from past failures and cohere around a unified anti-imperialist strategy (see "In Defense of Permanent Revolution," *Spartacist* No. 68, September 2023). This requires serious, long-term and systematic work. Unfortunately, the all-too-common practice on the revolutionary left is to cheerlead a popular upsurge, call for some sort of independent workers committees and then move on to greener pastures as soon as the opportunity recedes. Such methods spread illusions and cynicism; they do nothing to organize revolutionary struggle in the Global South.

Luis Tato/AFP

Madagascar, October 13: One of many Gen Z protests demanding the resignation of President Andry Rajoelina.

Right-Wing Populism in the West

What about the West? Are we on the brink of fascist dictatorships or is revolution around the corner? Neither, for the moment at least. Again, we must put hysterical impressionism to the side and look at the actual political trends. Throughout the West we see the political center collapsing under the blows of an ***insurgent populist right wing***. The strength of this movement comes from the fact that it is generally the only political force firmly opposing the liberal status quo of the past decades. Indeed, most major left-wing forces, while sometimes radical in their rhetoric, are fully committed to supporting the center against the right. Not only is this not stopping the right, it is also setting up the left to go down with the collapsing edifice of liberal democracy.

Different countries are at different stages of this process. In the U.S. and Italy, right-wing populism is already in power. However, internationally and domestically such forces still face political opposition from the leftovers of the previous era, hampering their actions but not providing a real challenge. In Britain, France and Germany, the centrist governments of Starmer, Macron and Merz are empty shells, despised by both the right and the left. They must turn to increasingly repressive and bureaucratic means to maintain their position. But with each maneuver they only further alienate the masses and fuel the ascent of reaction.

Then there are countries like Canada, Australia and Ireland, which think they will resist the Trumpist winds. In Canada, the U.S.'s aggressive economic measures have temporarily strengthened the liberal center. In Ireland and Australia, the hope is that these island nations will be isolated from the great currents of world politics. The problem is that these countries are all fundamentally dependent economically and militarily on the U.S., and for all their defiant words, their elites ***will*** bend the knee. Communists cannot allow themselves to be lulled by a false sense of security. It is just a matter of time before the liberal center collapses in these countries as well.

…And the Rise of the Left?

But what about the left? Many of the countries referred to above have also seen an uptick on the left: Zohran Mamdani's victory as New York City mayor, Catherine Connolly's election as Irish president, the rise of the Green Party and Your Party in Britain as well as the recent strikes in France, Italy and Greece. For many, these developments confirm that the rise of the left is at least equal to the rise of the right. Unfortunately, this view is wrong and based on a false reading of political dynamics.

To the extent that there has been a shift to the left, it has overwhelmingly been among layers of the liberal middle classes and students. Its impetus has been fear of the rising right and outrage that traditional liberals are betraying the values they claimed to stand for. It is not based on an organic rise of ***working-class consciousness and militancy***. In the main, the working class is ***not*** moving to the left but constitutes an important part of the base of right-wing populist parties. Other layers are demoralized, which also benefits reactionary forces. Since the ruling class is also moving to the right, left-wing progressive forces find themselves with no decisive social weight to support them.

Moreover, most of the left presents itself as the most consistent and militant defenders of liberal imperialism, not as a force aspiring to lead the working class toward socialism—Catherine Connolly, the Green Party in Britain and Die Linke in Germany are typical of this. Even in the soon to be formed Your Party, which has the ***potential*** to adopt a radical working-class program, most of its supporters and leaders are still very attached to traditional British liberalism. In all these cases, the task for socialists is to fight for a ***political break with liberalism*** and a clear orientation to ***building ties to the working class***.

In the U.S., with Trump in the White House and the Democratic Party in disarray, the dynamics are slightly different. Mamdani's victory against both MAGA and the Democratic Party establishment has many parallels with left-wing movements in other countries. However, there are at least two major distinctions. The first is that Mamdani emerged from ***within*** the traditional two-party system of U.S. imperialism. While many in the Democratic Party oppose him, he does not cross any red lines for the ruling class. Already figures like Barack Obama have reached out to Mamdani, seeking to bring him into the establishment fold. Second, Mamdani's campaign was not really based on defending the old liberal status quo. It raised minimal economic demands

continued on page 8

Spartaco

Rome, October 4: Banner at mass protest reads, "Throw Out the Government, Accomplice to Genocide!"

Turning Point...

(continued from page 7)

and for the most part stayed clear of social issues like immigration, black oppression and the trans question. As such, Mamdani, unlike the leftover politicians in Europe, may offer a glimpse into the future of the Democratic Party: more economically interventionist, less socially liberal.

The key thing to understand is that Mamdani is not rising on the crest of militant sentiments in the New York working class. Most workers are terrorized or demoralized and some still support Trump. For now, workers are still overwhelmingly concerned with keeping their heads above water as every aspect of life gets worse. This is particularly true among immigrant and black workers. And while sentiments among the middle classes and student youth are important, Marxists understand that without working-class support there can be no viable basis for radical left-wing politics. Thus, understanding sentiments in the working class and adjusting interventions accordingly must be at the heart of communist work in the current period.

Many will no doubt point to the recent strikes in Italy and France as a counterargument to the outline above. It is true that both countries have seen important days of strike action—in Italy's case, the largest in decades. However, these are exceptions that confirm the rule. Fundamentally, trends in Italy and France are not different from those in the rest of Europe. The center is collapsing, the right is in power or ascendant, the bulk of the working class is moving to the right and the liberal middle classes are panicking.

In France, the traditional one-day strike and parade was supplemented with radical agitation by urban progressive supporters of Mélenchon to "block everything." But the left is still on the back foot, the reactionary Rassemblement National is closer than ever to power and workers continue to reel from the defeated struggle against the pension reform in 2023. In this context, ultraleft agitation for a general strike only strengthens the right and the trade-union bureaucracy, who can present themselves as responsible agents of stability as opposed to an out-of-touch left.

As for Italy, the general strike in defense of Palestine was a show of force. But many workers resent the fact that these same union leaders have not waged any serious struggle against attacks by the bosses and the Meloni government. Moreover, the October strikes do not seem to have radically altered the political dynamics in Italy, and Meloni remains firmly in the saddle. Unfortunately, in both France and Italy the recent mobilizations were consistent with these countries' strong syndicalist traditions and appear more like the death throes of the old order rather than the first signs of a working-class awakening against the populist right.

Fascism Not Around the Corner

Does our analysis mean that fascism is imminent and inevitable? No. Although bigotry and right-wing populist forces are on the rise, this is not the same as fascism, which consists of paramilitary mobilizations to crush the workers movement and the oppressed. Racist violence from reactionary thugs is increasing, but it consists mainly of atomized incidents, not organized mass movements like those of the 20th century. As for increased state repression and authoritarianism, such as the ICE raids in the U.S., they point to a dangerous trend but not yet to the physical destruction of all forms of political opposition that comes with a fascist regime.

Since fascist violence targets the organized workers movement and oppressed groups and minorities, who compose much of the proletariat, it ***will*** face resistance from the working class. There is nothing inevitable in fascism's rise. The point of our analysis is not to be defeatist but to insist that stopping fascism and reaction requires a strategy proceeding from ***real conditions***, not those we ***wish*** existed.

Here we must insist that what is indeed inevitable is the collapse of the liberal center. No amount of electoral maneuvers or bureaucratic repression will save the old order. The frantic cries about the danger of fascism are simply desperate attempts to rally the left around the politics of the status quo. Like a drowning man, the liberal center will grab on to the left in a desperate attempt to stay afloat. The workers movement must respond by kicking liberalism in the face, not letting itself get dragged down with it.

The only real question for communists is how quickly the collapse of liberalism can lead to the rise of a new revolutionary working-class trend. Hastening this development must be the focus of our efforts. This requires no longer playing the role of a left appendage of liberalism. But it also requires engaging with concrete political developments, not simply shouting revolutionary verbiage into the wind. Only then can Marxists start rebuilding their own independent influence in the working class and undermine the hold of the right.

PART II: SHOCKS ON THE HORIZON

Now that we have elucidated some of the main political trends in world politics, we can turn our attention to the future. The current situation is very much on a knife's edge. Multiple simmering volcanos threaten to explode at any time and reshape the global order. A correct orientation in the period ahead requires an analysis of these various points of tension, of how they are likely to evolve and of the political impact they may have.

China: The Sleeping Giant

The biggest long-term source of geopolitical tensions is the conflict between the U.S. and China. That said, these do not seem about to explode quite yet. The tariff war between the U.S. and China has revealed just how strong China's position has become (a fact underplayed in our recent analysis). Not only does China dominate global industrial production, but it also has a chokehold on rare earth minerals that are critical to the U.S. military-industrial complex. This forced the U.S. to partially retreat in its economic war against China and has made clear that the U.S. is in no position to provoke a conventional war either. The U.S. can and most likely will find a way around China's control of such critical economic choke points. But this process will take years.

Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP

Busan, South Korea, October 30: Trump and China's president Xi Jinping meet for trade talks.

If China were intent on defeating the U.S., it would make sense for it to press its advantage and paralyze the entire supply chain of the U.S. armed forces. However, as we have already seen, the CPC is a conservative bureaucracy that has no such intentions. It has opted instead to stabilize its relationship with the U.S. by agreeing to a one-year trade deal. We shall see how long this agreement holds. But in the interim, it gives the U.S. time to address gaps in its supply chain and gives it a free hand to attack weaker countries—developments that may well come back to bite China in the future (see "China: Do Nothing, Lose," *Spartacist* No. 70, May 2025).

Venezuela in the Crosshairs

The most immediate threat is to Venezuela, which has been the focus of a huge military buildup. A full-on war between the U.S. and Venezuela would profoundly shake all of Latin America. If the U.S. is successful in overthrowing President Maduro, this could lead to a major political realignment on the continent, reversing the democratic gains made in past decades and bringing back the days of pro-U.S. right-wing military dictatorships. The fall of Maduro would also significantly tighten the noose around the Cuban workers state.

While military aggression against Venezuela, limited or full-blown, is a distinct possibility, there are reasons the U.S. might want to avoid this. In the first instance, a war with Venezuela would be very unpopular in the U.S. itself. There would certainly be huge opposition to a major ground invasion. Not only would a war threaten to turn into another quagmire, but nothing guarantees that it would be a success. Military aggression could easily backfire and rally the Venezuelan population behind the regime, while also fueling massive opposition to the U.S. throughout Latin America.

No doubt certain people in the State Department hope that the simple threat of American firepower will be enough to cause the Maduro regime to collapse. Over the past decades, the regime established by Hugo Chávez and now headed by Maduro has restrained and dampened the revolutionary energy of the Venezuelan masses. This and the brutal consequences of U.S. economic sanctions have steadily weakened the regime's popular support, leading it to become increasingly brittle and repressive. Nevertheless, for the working class, a capitulation by the Maduro regime without a fight would be the worst-case scenario. It would give a massive victory to the Venezuelan *gusanos* at minimum cost to U.S. imperialism and profoundly demoralize the masses throughout Latin America.

We can't know what the U.S. will decide to do. Unfortunately, in this case Trump holds all the initiative and has few immediate restrictions on what he can do. But once the genie is out of the bottle and a military conflict is engaged, the consequences could be unpredictable and the outcome may very well not be in Trump's favor. No matter what happens, revolutionaries must stand steadfast in defense of Venezuela, and any other country the U.S. sets its sights on.

Ukraine at an Inflection Point

When it comes to the Ukraine war, we have a totally different situation. Here the initiative is firmly in Russia's hands, and Putin has no qualms about playing his hand to the full extent. Trump's diplomatic flailing about has run its course. There was no bluffing his way out of the fact that Russia is winning. Recent negotiations have only confirmed that the conflict will be decided by force of arms, not diplomacy.

The pace of Russian gains has been increasing over the last two years, and we are now at a major inflection point in the conflict. The fall of the city of Pokrovsk not only represents the loss of a major logistics hub but also potentially opens the way for a collapse of Ukraine's whole position in Donbass—the epicenter of the war. The fall of Donbass would leave the way open for Russia to march all the way to the Dnieper River, Ukraine's key economic artery. It's possible that the onset of winter and Ukrainian resistance will delay this for a couple of more months. But the writing is on the wall, and it is only a matter of time before the Ukrainian lines collapse under the relentless Russian offensive.

Current developments are causing catastrophic and irreplaceable losses of manpower and equipment for Ukraine. They are also setting the stage for a sharp political crisis in Kiev, further undermining the war effort. The consequences of Ukraine's defeat will not only be felt in the country itself but will cause a political earthquake throughout Europe. The German, French and British governments have sunk an enormous amount of military, economic and political capital into Ukraine, and its collapse will shake the political establishment to its core. The shock will also be felt in the U.S., but Trump will benefit from having slightly more distance from the whole affair than his European counterparts.

Only after a Ukrainian military collapse will diplomacy play a more decisive role. The question will be whether the U.S. and Russia are able to agree on a settlement that would at least freeze the line of fracture between the pro-American bloc and Russia or if the conflict will continue. In the first scenario, we could see a reactionary order imposed on Europe based on a Russo-American pact. That outcome would be ideal for Russia, which has neither the ambition nor the economic weight to seek the domination of Europe at the present time. The main obstacle to reaching an agreement is that the U.S. has been unwilling to swallow its pride, accept defeat and roll back its influence in Eastern Europe. The U.S. also faces strong opposition from Ukraine and the EU to any substantial settlement with Russia.

If military hostilities continue, this would leave Europe extremely unstable and could eventually lead to a military collision between Russia and NATO, the outcome of which could be cataclysmic. Unfortunately, because of the craven capitulations

to nationalism by the workers movement in Ukraine and Russia (not helped in any way by the international socialist movement), the possibility of a working-class solution to the conflict appears very remote at present. This could rapidly change under the blows of a sharp crisis, but the near future appears bleak. More than ever, communists must work toward building a revolutionary pole in the region, uniting the proletariat through a common anti-imperialist program (see "Ukraine War: Where Do You Stand Now?" *Workers Vanguard* No. 1184, April 2025).

Israel Prepares Next Bloodbath

Since October 7, Israel continuously escalated its campaign of genocidal terror against the Palestinians. Because of the divisions and political vacillations of the Axis of Resistance, it was able to engage the components of the Axis separately and at the time of its choosing. This allowed Israel to keep up its war effort for two years despite being overextended. Now the U.S.-brokered ceasefire allows Israel to pause, as it undoubtedly prepares for its next wave of carnage.

We can summarize the outcome for the Axis of Resistance as follows: Hamas has been dealt a severe blow but has held on, Hezbollah acted like a paper tiger and is licking its wounds, Assad's collapse resulted in a strategic defeat, and the Houthis emerged with their reputation enhanced. As for Iran, the senior partner of the alliance, it was able to hold its own during the 12-day war with Israel and the U.S. However, its position in the region has been weakened and it faces growing internal tensions.

Despite the brave face put on by the Resistance, no doubt many will ask: "Was all this worth it?" Following the outcome of the last two years, there is pressure to draw defeatist conclusions and make concessions to the U.S., Israel and the UAE. Such attitudes must be ***opposed at all costs***. Israel and the U.S. will continue their carnage in the region until they are forced to stop. Resistance is not a choice! The recent conflict has confirmed that fact and shown how conciliation and vacillation only lead to more Israeli butchery. The Palestinian cause is not only righteous but also a question of ***self-preservation*** for the entire Arab population in West Asia.

We must be clear that the conflict is still active and Palestinians are still being killed; it has only been reduced in intensity and will explode again. We must make sure that when it does, the correct political and military lessons will have been drawn (see "Kill the Deal!" *Spartacist* supplement, 8 October). This will not happen automatically; communists must help draw out these lessons and bring them to vanguard elements of the anti-Zionist struggle, in the Arab world and abroad.

South Asia Unraveling

South Asia has been shaken by increased instability. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal have all witnessed popular uprisings in the last few years. Tensions in Kashmir are simmering. Only some months ago, Pakistan and India were at war and recently Afghanistan and Pakistan engaged in hostilities. Now tensions are ramping up once again following bombings in both New Delhi and Islamabad. As the various governments in the region feel the increasing weight of geopolitical tensions and imperialist economic pressure, it is difficult to predict what will happen next. However, further shocks are sure to come. Given the demographic and economic weight of the Indian subcontinent, these are sure to have important consequences for the world situation.

Rising tensions in South Asia are themselves largely the product of an increasingly fraught international context. India, the region's hegemon and most stable country, is itself increasingly squeezed. The rapid deterioration of relations between Trump and Prime Minister Modi surprised and shook the Indian political class. Many have speculated that India will seek a rapprochement with China and turn away from the U.S. Little credence should be given to such notions. The Indian capitalist class remains deeply integrated with the West. It will take a much deeper crisis to sever those bonds, not least because relations between China and India have historically been extremely hostile.

As tensions threaten the region, the left must rise above the hairsplitting historical debates it revels in and set itself toward organizing a unified struggle against imperialism and the venal capitalists selling off their countries and pitting their peoples against each other (see "South Asian Powder Keg," *Spartacist* No. 70, May 2025).

The Decisive Factor: The Global Economy

The single most important factor in the development of world politics is the global economy. It fundamentally underpins everything else and its evolution will be decisive in shaping the course of events. While it is impossible to predict exactly when the next major economic crisis will hit, there is no doubt that one is approaching and that it will have devastating consequences.

The global economy never fully recovered from the 2008 crisis. The overall growth of the real economy has been muted and living standards in most countries have been stagnant or have gone into reverse. The main factors propping up global growth have been huge investments in infrastructure and housing in China, Western governments' gigantic monetary and fiscal stimulus to their economies and a speculative frenzy in asset prices centered in the U.S. Of these three factors, only the third continues to this day.

The CPC has slowed the rate of investment in infrastructure and has burst the housing bubble, bringing the market into a depression. In response, the regime has invested massively in "new productive forces," driving down the price of many industrial goods, including electric cars and solar panels. This massive investment has created a deflationary cycle in China and accelerated the tendency toward deindustrialization in other parts of the world. Across the globe, we can observe a slowing down of production and an oversupply of industrial goods.

Abdalhkem Abu Riash/Anadolu

Gaza, July 30: Palestinians in line for food as Israeli blockades cause starvation.

On the monetary side of the equation, most major economies saw increased interest rates in response to the spike in inflation following the Covid pandemic. This marked a break with the ultra-loose borrowing conditions that had been in existence since 2008. The result is that borrowing is growing ever more expensive, pushing many governments to try to limit their deficits. Most imperialist countries now find themselves with historically high debt burdens, which threaten to cause great political and economic instability in the future. These problems are all exacerbated by the drive to drastically increase military expenditure.

As for the stock bubble centered on the U.S. market, it has continued to expand following the correction in the early days of the Trump presidency. This has enabled those who own stocks to continue consuming at high levels. Meanwhile, everyone else is struggling more and more to get by. The massive spike in tech stocks due to the supposed AI revolution has continued to be the main, and increasingly the only, driver of stock market gains. The stock valuation of the chip designer Nvidia recently hit five trillion dollars, which means the company is worth as much as the entire annual output of the German economy. Clearly this is insane. So far, the bubble has been able to continue growing by leveraging the rising value of AI companies to purchase more AI products, causing an upward spiral in valuations. This will necessarily end in a catastrophic collapse. When exactly this occurs can't be predicted. But we can see that there is a decreasing number of factors supporting the stock bubble, which is reliant on the continued growth of a declining number of stocks.

When the music stops, we will get a glimpse into the true state of the world economy and the real balance of economic might between the great powers. In the first instance, a major shock will probably not lead to a rise in working-class militancy. Fear for the future and for self-preservation will probably be the prevailing attitudes, allowing governments to further squeeze working people despite their growing unpopularity. This coming economic hardship is one of the main reasons we insist on the need for the working class to adopt a defensive posture (see "What Union Militants Should Do," *Workers Vanguard* No. 1186, August 2025).

However, there are certain limits to the working class getting pushed around, and it will eventually come to the realization that collective struggle is necessary to survive. Particularly when the economy picks up again, we could see the rise of working-class struggles on a massive scale.

Revolutionaries in a Reactionary Period

As communists, we recognize the importance of the subjective element, that is, the ability of individuals and parties to shape history through their actions. At certain points, such as the October Revolution of 1917, the conscious action of a revolutionary vanguard can be decisive. But the role of individuals is only decisive to the extent that they place themselves within the development of objective historical processes. To bring this into the realm of sailing, it is obvious that knowing how to position a sail is decisive if a boat is to catch the wind, but without wind there is no sailing.

What, then, are revolutionaries to do in a period where the winds of class struggle are not blowing in our direction? Certainly, this greatly limits the direct impact on the masses that we can have. We cannot through our own subjective efforts push the masses into struggle. But this does not mean we are irrelevant. Quite the opposite. Under difficult objective conditions, it is all the more important to be deliberate and conscious in deciding where we place our energies. We must anticipate future political developments and position ourselves to meet them successfully (see "The Crisis in the Marxist Left and the Tasks of the ICL," *Spartacist* No. 70, May 2025).

No doubt our analysis will be considered too pessimistic by most, even defeatist. We can only shrug our shoulders at such critics. Their blind optimism in the face of growing reaction is a crude caricature of Marxism. Rather, we lean on the experience of the Bolshevik Party as described by Trotsky:

> "In these immense events the 'Trotskyists' learned the rhythm of history, that is, the dialectics of the class struggle. They also learned, it seems, and to a certain degree successfully, how to subordinate their subjective plans and programs to this objective rhythm. They learned not to fall into despair over the fact that the laws of history do not depend upon their individual tastes and are not subordinated to their own moral criteria. They learned to subordinate their individual tastes to the laws of history. They learned not to become frightened by the most powerful enemies if their power is in contradiction to the needs of historical development. They know how to swim against the stream in the deep conviction that the new historic flood will carry them to the other shore. Not all will reach that shore, many will drown. But to participate in this movement with open eyes and with an intense will—only this can give the highest moral satisfaction to a thinking being!"
>
> —*Their Morals and Ours* (1938) ■

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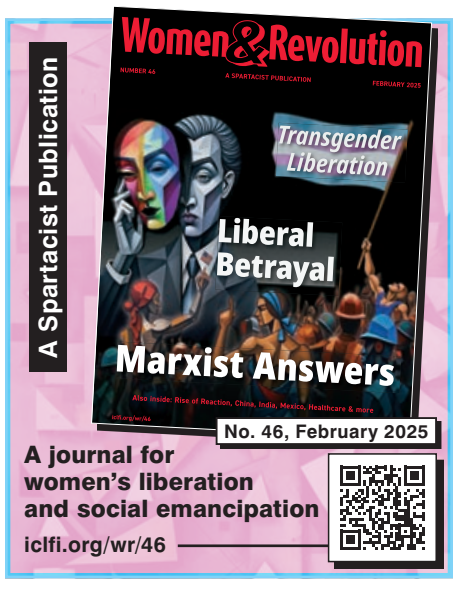

Mamdani…

(continued from page 12)

with its biggest rivals. State intervention to smooth over economic difficulties will inevitably transfer the burden of saving capitalism from the crises it creates onto the backs of working people.

This road, pioneered by FDR during the Great Depression and World War II, is particularly useful to an imperialist power in need of fortifying its position. This is ***not at all*** progressive. The purpose is to head off struggle by the working class and line up those angered by social ills behind the institutions of the class enemy. Only today, unlike at the time of FDR, the U.S. empire is on the decline, not the rise, so there is much less fat to go around.

The future direction of the Democratic Party remains unwritten, but Mamdani's focus on "bread and butter" issues while putting "wokeness" in the backseat is a distinct possibility. The mayor-elect sent his main establishment rival packing not once, but twice on the major NYC stage. Even though the rest of the country does not resemble the city, if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. To win office, other Democrats who follow Mamdani's lead might not call themselves democratic socialists. But they can offer a few mild economic promises to pull workers and the oppressed back into a party that is still widely hated. This has been the longstanding role of "progressives" like AOC and Bernie Sanders. Mamdani and the legions of volunteers that his DSA team assembled certainly have a vitality that Chuck Schumer and the walking-dead party old guard lack.

Trump himself has returned to singing the song of affordability. Last year, such rhetoric played well with voters choking on the inflation fueled by Biden's policies. But since re-entering the White House, Trump's own inability to corral rising prices has become increasingly obvious, and he is taking the heat for the persistence of inflation. The resulting drop in Trump's popularity was entirely foreseeable, especially when he is subjecting the economy to trade wars and government shutdowns. Not just Mamdani, but moderate Democrats like the governor-elects of New Jersey and Virginia cashed in.

It is not inconceivable that Mamdani could deliver on at least some of his promises either. His main platform is not terribly radical or any kind of challenge to private property. The implementation of these reforms is entirely possible without reducing the standing or power of Wall Street. Even the most far-reaching of the bunch, free or heavily subsidized universal childcare, exists in many capitalist West European countries. Of course, any such program will face considerable opposition from the ruling class in NYC, where only minimal resources have been invested in this area and confronting segregation head on is necessary to provide quality services citywide.

WV Photo

October 18: Spartacists draw a line against Mamdani mania at Democratic Party's "No Kings" march in Manhattan.

Iwamura/AP

New York City, November 4: Youthful celebration of Mamdani's victory, one of many hosted across city by NYC-DSA.

Mamdani's recent liberal predecessor, Bill de Blasio, froze rents for three of the eight years of his tenure, and the mayor appoints the entire rent board. While moderate Democratic governor Kathy Hochul, who oversees the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), is balking at taxing the rich to fund Mamdani's agenda, the MTA operated free local buses for a period during the pandemic, and bus fares make up a very small share of the agency's revenue. Drumming up some additional funds through increased taxation of the wealthy is not out of the question at a time when Trump is handing them massive tax breaks.

Of course, the bankers and landlords will kick and scream over even the smallest concessions and look to gain back whatever they lose through other means. Property owners, for example, will likely invest even less in maintenance than they already do in the event of a rent freeze, driving up the number of distressed buildings and vacancies in rent-stabilized apartments, while further gouging renters in the majority of apartments, where a rent freeze would not apply. Mamdani's proposal is not a blueprint for quality, affordable housing on a mass scale, but rather a source of division, as a significant majority of workers do not live in rent-stabilized apartments and therefore would not receive any benefit whatsoever.

Absent greater revenue from taxes (which could well fall on working people too), the only way for Mamdani to finance his reforms would be to take the money from other areas in a cash-strapped city that Trump will undoubtedly further bleed of resources. Working people, as they fear, would then shoulder the load. In his victory speech, Mamdani talked tough against Trump, who has threatened to unleash his fury on the city. But the incoming Democratic mayor will have no better options than his counterparts in Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities to fight back.

The Democratic opposition to Trump showed itself to be as divided and feeble as ever a mere week after the elections, when the White House beat it into submission to reopen the federal government. So much for their vaunted defense of health insurance subsidies against a White House that had already taken the ax to Medicaid. Despite the electoral setbacks, Trump did not waver from his next-level bare-knuckle politics—moving to impose mass layoffs, deny food stamps to millions, cut air traffic, etc.—and the Democrats predictably folded in the end. The main takeaway from this grim episode is that the working class can only rely on its own collective power to defend itself.

A working-class resistance must be cohered to give NYC a fighting chance to repel Trump. The left heaps praise on Mamdani for supposedly opening the door to this possibility (see Left Voice: Zohran's victory "is a mandate to fight the cost of living crisis, defend immigrants, and stop genocide"). But his campaign pushed to the back the particular concerns of immigrants, black people and other specially oppressed groups in the name of a false unity around economic issues alone. This is downright counterproductive when these groups are the main targets of attacks that drive down the conditions of the entire working class.

Quality, low-cost housing for all cannot possibly be achieved as long as the miserable conditions of segregated black communities persist. The same goes for decent childcare when any such infrastructure is utterly lacking in minority neighborhoods. The liberals and their left tails have driven a wedge between the working class and the specially oppressed by equating sacrifice by the former with defense of the latter. The way forward is to link the defense of the specially oppressed to the defense of the working class against the common enemy in both the Republican and Democratic parties.

The Marxist left needs to snap out of its Mamdani mania. What is on display is not a rising revolutionary tide, but the failure of the left to maintain any kind of minimum standards necessary to actually advance the struggles of the working class as a force for itself and all the oppressed. Openly embracing Zohran like the Party for Socialism and Liberation does or even giving him a pass like Left Voice will only backfire. Mamdani is about to take his place alongside the "powers that be." The left's enthusiasm for the next NYC mayor and his economic populism promises only to further discredit socialism in the eyes of the working class and create greater obstacles to uniting workers along class lines.

Let's See to Whom Zohran Is Accountable

The Mamdani campaign has swelled the ranks of NYC-DSA. But it also has brought forth fully the bureaucratism of the chapter leadership, which has closed ranks to fend off any potential internal criticism of Mamdani. Egregiously, the rights of the membership were stomped on at an October meeting in order to quash efforts by some on the DSA left to declare Mamdani accountable to the organization and its broader program. This is not simply some unfortunate turn of events, but an outgrowth of operating inside the capitalist Democratic Party.

The NYC-DSA leadership, drawn from the DSA right, views its purpose as simply getting more "progressive" Democrats elected. These Democratic Party operatives have direct experience in boosting a long line of politicians who talk big, only to betray once in office. In contrast, the DSA left claims to be for, at least someday, cutting ties with the Democrats and founding an independent workers party. Today, though, the vast majority of the DSA left support Mamdani and consider his campaign a model of how to build up socialist forces within the party of the class enemy. Well aware that Mamdani has limitations, they want to keep him accountable to socialist principles in order to ensure this project remains on track.

Since the primaries, Mamdani's trajectory has been consistently toward conciliation of the bankers and landlords, racist cops and Democratic establishment. He has pledged to work with the billionaires, apologized to the NYPD for having called it racist and anti-queer and appointed a transition team mostly made up of veterans of past Democratic city administrations. In turn, establishment icons like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have embraced Mamdani, and Wall Street is giving its cautious backing to the mayor-elect.

Although most on the DSA left view the two things very differently, the NYC-DSA leadership's bureaucratism and Mamdani's trajectory come from the same place: it is the price to pay to be a power broker among the Democrats. To get to where Mamdani is now and stay there, he has to be truly accountable only to the city rulers who call the shots in the party. But for those on the DSA left who remain unconvinced, we propose to test the waters to clarify where Mamdani truly stands.

An obvious place to start is to lay down some basic accountability criteria in the area that many on the DSA left consider his biggest mistake thus far: his choice for police commissioner. Despite her own apparent reluctance to stay on, Mamdani insists on courting Jessica Tisch for the job. The billionaire heiress, Zionist pig and ICE collaborator Tisch wants to flood the streets with more racist cops while keeping City Hall at arm's length. Nothing good can come from her continued running of the NYPD.

Any socialist mayor worth his salt would be looking to completely curtail the power of the police thugs loyal to Wall Street and build up separate bodies of working-class self-defense to replace them. Mamdani clearly is going in the other direction. The DSA left should move now before it is too late to get motions passed in every possible body of the organization instructing the mayor-elect to dump Tisch and install in her place a police commissioner who will immediately open all police archives to expose their crimes, jail the killer cops and declare the non-enforcement of the anti-strike Taylor Law. The installation of a commissioner meeting these criteria would cross multiple red lines for the ruling class and encourage workers to stand up to fight collectively in their own name.

When these and similar motions fail to achieve their purpose, one conclusion should emerge: an immediate split from all Democratic Party elements is the only way to maintain the integrity of the socialist cause. Attempting to refurbish the image of the Democratic Party at a time when this party of Palestinian genocide and economic ruin is generally disliked among workers is not the job of socialists. Rather, we must lead workers and the oppressed to break from the stranglehold of the two-party system and cohere an independent organization so that they can successfully fight for their interests against the ruling class.■

JBA Says: Ditch Tisch and the Taylor Law!

We reprint below a November 20 statement released by the Just Break Already caucus in the DSA.

We in the Just Break Already caucus have warned against what becomes of DSA candidates who make a place in the genocidal party of bankers and corporate landlords. Doing so comes with the heavy price of having to work with the billionaires, i.e., class collaboration. This undermines the struggle for socialism at every turn. AOC and other "progressive" Democrats have given us painful lessons in capitulation to the oligarchs. For DSAers to have any hope of success building socialism, we must make a clean break with the Democratic Party and their billionaire masters.

We have already observed Zohran moving to the right on questions of policing, while putting public distance between himself and the DSA program. Nevertheless, many in the DSA believe we can hold him accountable to socialist principles. Though the JBA disagrees with this because he has indicated a willingness to answer to establishment forces, the best way to see if something works is to try it. So, let's put accountability to the test! The JBA says: try to hold Zohran accountable in action! Demand that he implement some basic defensive measures on behalf of the working class! Let's see on which side of the class line he'll stand!

For a start, get rid of hated police commissioner Jessica Tisch. Zohran has recruited Tisch to stay on as head cop, but Tisch will be a nightmare for working people and minorities. She is a zealous enforcer for the NYC elite and the scion of one of the city's most powerful Zionist families. Democratic Party politics is all about offers and deals. Hiring her is a massive peace offering to those powerful financial and Zionist interests Zohran was elected to oppose. If we really believe we can hold Mr. Mamdani accountable, then we ought to call on him to fire Tisch and replace her with someone who will open the police archives and throw homicidal cops in jail.

If Zohran is really on our side, he ought to prove it by refusing to protect state secrecy and the killers in blue who terrorize the workers and minorities of NYC. This is an absolutely basic demand in our own defense that any socialist candidate worth their salt would fight to implement. If Zohran won't even make a fight against the crimes of the cops and their endless cover-ups, then that should send the DSA a strong message about where his loyalties lie.

We should demand that Zohran refuse to enforce and fight for the repeal of the Taylor Law. This pernicious piece of New York legislation criminalizes public employees' strikes. For decades, it has been used to break the back of working-class struggles. It should go without saying that any declared socialist who wants to see workers organized and strong should be against strikebreaking laws. Moreover, to take no public position is an abandonment of any fight for an affordable city, the rights of workers and the construction of socialism. If Zohran is **our** mayor, let's see if he'll challenge government strikebreaking and attacks on the working class. A socialist mayor who won't stand for us on such basic questions gives us no reason to think he'll stand with us on anything else.

Other DSA caucuses have proclaimed their support for Zohran loud and clear, and they raise the question of "building socialism in Zohran's New York." Here is our chance to begin! A socialist doesn't abandon the defense of the working class and oppressed minorities for political clout. Demand Zohran stand for our defense! Demand that he:

- **Fire Police Commissioner Tisch! Appoint a commissioner who will:**
  - **Open all police archives!**
  - **Jail the killer cops!**
- **Refuse to enforce or support the Taylor Law.**

Drew/AFP

November 19: Socialist darling Mamdani goes from denouncing the police to taking a stroll with Zionist police commissioner Tisch at cop memorial.

Dear Socialists…

(continued from page 12)

struggle to bring about such a break. We propose that members of Left Voice, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Alternative and everybody else who wants to build an independent socialist movement join together with us to form a united front of clean break forces in the DSA.

As we are all aware, groups on the left have differences on a wide range of issues. But these differences should not stand in the way of joint pursuit of this crucial task. There is much to be gained by those who are serious about a clean break working together. Doing so would give a huge boost to the small and scattered voices for a clean break, greatly amplifying our potential impact. In particular, we would have greater weight to counter the "vote blue no matter who" Right and move the dirty break Left in our direction.

This will not be easy. Earlier this year, we worked with others to put up a clean break resolution for the DSA National Convention. It didn't even get enough signatures for consideration. Most of the dirty break Left stopped talking about a break altogether—making clear that when they argue to use the Dems for socialist purposes until the time is right to split and found a workers party, that time is never. The "clean break" advocates all but disappeared. Zohran has been the inescapable magnetic force pulling the DSA Left toward the Democrats.

How then to advance the fight for a clean break? By fighting to expose, not fawning over, Zohran. Mamdani is the poster child for the grand dirty break experiment. He is viewed as a socialist fighter who has successfully harnessed the Democratic Party electoral machinery to get into office, where he is supposedly positioned to build socialism. The illusions in him among the DSA Left cannot be overstated.

To get anywhere, clean breakers will have to find concrete ways to puncture these illusions. We need to demonstrate that his betrayals are not the result of simple miscalculations, but flow from his role as a representative of the capitalist Democratic Party. To remain useful to this mainstay of U.S. imperialism and move up its ranks, Mamdani must sacrifice what made him popular in the first place. The examples of AOC and Rashida Tlaib are instructive—AOC went from calling to abolish ICE to helping spike a rail strike and giving a primetime endorsement of Kamala Harris at the DNC. Tlaib helped funnel the pro-Palestine movement into the "uncommitted" campaign, and through it, to Harris.

Currently, the JBA in NYC-DSA is advocating motions to demand that Zohran fire Tisch and appoint a police commissioner who will open all the police archives to expose their crimes, jail the killer cops and refuse to enforce the Taylor Law. Tisch has been a hard pill for the Left to swallow. Most Left caucuses signed Within Our Lifetime's petition protesting Zohran's decision on Tisch, but they are dragging their feet on waging a real struggle in the DSA. Our purpose is to force the issue and chip away at the notion that Zohran can be held accountable to socialist principle while in the Democratic Party. It is also a means of putting the fight against black oppression front and center, beginning with the struggle against racist cop terror. This is necessary to show how Zohran's economism is incapable of overcoming the racial and other divisions that hold back the working class. The JBA motion is part of the struggle to prepare a clean break in the DSA right now.

We all want to build a workers party. But to do that, we need the workers, and there is a huge gulf between the working class and socialists. Association with the Dems has discredited the left. To the extent workers know about socialism, it's the DSA they know—and they see the DSA as little better than the hated liberals. Unless we actively fight to sever the link between the DSA and the Dems, we won't win the workers. When the Marxist left portrays the Democrat Mamdani's victory as a leap in mass socialist consciousness, they are not only totally misreading where workers are at, but also undermining their own arguments that the Democratic Party is the graveyard of all social movements.

The time for a clean break has never been more urgent or necessary as Trump puts the screws to workers and the oppressed. Let's put our money where our mouth is. Join us in a united front of clean breakers in the DSA!

Comradely greetings,
Edward Dalton for the
Just Break Already caucus

JUST BREAK ALREADY

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WORKERS VANGUARD

What Mamdani's Victory Really Represents

Gripa/Abaca

November 21: Affordable housing advocate and real estate billionaire join hands at White House.

The following was first issued as a Workers Vanguard *supplement on November 18.*

Almost the entire left is celebrating the victory of DSA member and Democratic candidate Zohran Mamdani in the New York City mayoral election as a much-needed political earthquake and win for socialism. But this assessment contains an awful lot of wishful thinking. To know how best to build toward socialism under the present circumstances, we must take a sober look at what this development really represents.

While Mamdani was virtually unknown a year ago, his meteoric ascent was propelled by near-universal familiarity with the suffocating cost of living. It is no secret that the NYC housing market is out of control. In the Bronx, the poorest of the five boroughs, the average family pays over 80 percent of its income toward rent. This is clearly unsustainable. Many low-wage workers have been priced out of the city altogether. Even Brooklyn brownstone owners are having a lot of trouble maintaining their properties when the expense of groceries, transportation, childcare and everything else is far outpacing income gains.

With so many sinking under this affordability crisis—which not only runs red hot in NYC, but also blankets the entire country—Mamdani promised relief through a series of reforms, including a rent freeze, free buses and childcare and city-owned groceries. These proposals increasingly caught on, especially among younger New Yorkers with enormous debt and bleak job prospects and recent transplants to the city experiencing massive sticker shock. Despite considerable backlash from the Democratic establishment and Wall Street, Mamdani kept to the affordability message and proudly wore the "democratic socialist" label.

While not formally a part of his campaign, Mamdani's pro-Palestinian views also made waves. This support to Palestine was considered a breath of fresh air by opponents of Israel's genocide and worthy of contempt by mainstream Democrats. That Mamdani is both an outlier in his own party and willing to backtrack to avoid getting cast out (e.g., renouncing the "globalize the intifada" slogan) is a testament to just how thoroughly the interests of U.S. imperialism are bound up with Zionism and set the limits of acceptability. Mamdani's open practice of his Muslim faith on the campaign trail was also a selling point among the city's large and growing Muslim population, which has been marginalized and under siege for many years after the September 11 attacks.

The bankers and landlords erupted in hostility at the prospect of a Mamdani City Hall, and his Democratic opponents and the tabloid media engaged in open redbaiting and Islamophobic smear jobs in a failed bid to derail his campaign. This hysteria spread not because Mamdani is preparing the socialist transformation of the city or otherwise represents an existential threat to the oligarchy, but because the oligarchy never wants to accept even the slightest curbs on its profit-seeking. Rampant real-estate speculation is a tremendous source of ill-gotten wealth in NYC—and a driver of soaring housing prices. But even while stepping on the toes of the city elite, Mamdani is providing them a great service. He is saving them from the consequences of their parasitic behavior and preventing the discontent of working people from finding a political outlet that would represent a real challenge to the reign of Wall Street.

Mamdani's economic populism generated quite a bit of enthusiasm among certain layers, especially younger Asians, Latinos and black people as well as recent graduates and young professionals, who—like most workers—are getting squeezed out of NYC. He is viewed as a savior in these quarters. The younger generations filled out an army of campaign volunteers whose door knocking helped offset the significant monetary advantage that the billionaires heaped upon Andrew Cuomo, his chief rival in both the primary and general elections. As a result, the turnout was the largest for a mayoral election in decades, although the scandal-ridden Cuomo also received more votes than most past victors.

Even while Mamdani carried low-income areas like East New York and large sections of the Bronx, the poorest city residents went in nearly equal numbers for Cuomo. Mamdani's working-class support is a far cry from the overwhelming numbers portrayed by his campaign and the left. Most workers did not vote and even those who did are skeptical that he will ever be able to deliver or that anything could be free without trade-offs or hidden costs. That said, Mamdani managed to flip some working-class neighborhoods that Cuomo captured in the primaries.

In short, Zohran's victory was not the product of an insurgent working class. But the left presents it as grounds to launch a working-class counteroffensive, claiming that the election outcome signals a leap in class consciousness and a willingness among working-class New Yorkers to duke it out with the billionaires. But there is no evidence of such. In NYC, movements for progressive causes, such as the defense of the Palestinians, remain as small and isolated as elsewhere in the country.

In particular, the working class is not in the streets in any kind of consistent, organized fashion and strike action against the bosses has all but dried up. The only protest of any size of late was last month's No Kings Day march, which was directed entirely toward roping anti-Trump sentiment into a Democratic revival—a purpose at odds with the working class taking the lead. Across the country, workers are by and large either open MAGA supporters or trying to stay out of the mix, and New York City is no exception.

Instead of declaring ever onward and upward when working-class defensive struggles are at an ebb, the left should engage in the hard work required to actually get the class on its feet. The order of the day is to intervene among workers to encourage collective action in the face of the many divisions pulling them apart. The working class will be the deciding factor and winning its allegiance will be possible only if revolutionaries lay out how to defend its own class interests, based on the actual state of play. Chasing after Mamdani will just make this all the more difficult.

Mild Reforms That Provide No Answers

The left presents Mamdani as if he has drawn some fundamental line against the oligarchy. But the very opposite is the case. His brand of economic populism with social-democratic coloration is one route the ruling class can go to pursue its strategic objective of preparing the country for increased hostilities

continued on page 10

Dear Socialists:

Fight in DSA to Break with Dems

The Just Break Already caucus in the DSA issued the following open letter to the left on December 18.

Dear comrades,

It is no secret that the DSA has grown by leaps and bounds thanks to Zohran's victory or that it is by far the largest declared socialist organization in the country. Clearly, what happens inside the DSA will influence, either positively or negatively, the trajectory of the socialist movement here. That's why we read with interest the recent Left Voice article, "It's Time for a Decisive Step Toward a Socialist, Working-Class Party: DSA Must Break with the Democratic Party." We in the DSA's Just Break Already caucus say: Hallelujah to that! We especially appreciated the observation:

> "It is impossible to take that fight [for a socialist party] to the end trapped within the confines of a bourgeois party. We call for DSA to break with the Democratic Party. This would be the most auspicious step towards a socialist party in the United States in decades. Staying inside the Democratic Party—whether it is to get access to its ballot line or with real illusions in reforming it into a vehicle of working-class politics—inevitably channels the energy of the working class and youth into the confines of this capitalist party."

The JBA has spent two years fighting for an immediate clean break. Left groups routinely condemn the Dems and say that workers need their own party. But to make a real difference requires engaging in actual

continued on page 11